

The Copley Circle



Newsletter 2 | September 2024



*The future in
your hands*

AWC acknowledges and pays our respect to the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Country upon which we live and work, who have been responsibly stewarding our lands and waters for tens of thousands of years. We respectfully acknowledge their continuing connection to land, sea, culture and community, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.

For millennia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have actively managed their land, shaping long-term ecological cycles by caring for country. AWC is privileged to work in long-term partnerships with Traditional Owners and representative Aboriginal Corporations. These partnerships are vital for conservation success in Australia.

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This page: Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary protects spectacular landscapes, including extensive salt lakes. John Massingham/AWC

Cover image: A vulnerable Golden Bandicoot. Tom Sayers/AWC

Welcome



Ten years ago, Australia lost one of its great conservationists and philanthropists when Australian Wildlife Conservancy (AWC) founder Martin Copley AM passed away. Martin made an extraordinary contribution towards reversing biodiversity decline and I am very proud of the projects we are delivering that build on his legacy. I hope you feel a strong sense of pride too, as it is your generosity that is providing hope for Australia's most endangered wildlife.

The next decade is both a critical and promising time for restoring Australian wildlife and habitats. As a country we have to focus on better outcomes for how land is being used. Expanding on our partnerships with First Nations people, pastoralists, government agencies and national park agencies will powerfully extend the reach of conservation for the benefit of all.

I live with my family on our own little sanctuary, a five-acre block on Noongar Country just to the south of Perth. We have gradually restored it to a now bustling home of Brushtail Possums, Wambenger Brush-tailed Phascogales and three species of Black-Cockatoos. For me it demonstrates that we can all make a difference to the future of the natural world.

The Copley Circle is a special group, sharing a name with our founder to reflect your own wonderful legacy. Thank you for entrusting AWC to act on your values into the future.



Tim Allard
Chief Executive



Growing up amidst the cornfields of central USA, Australia's iconic native species like the Platypus and Koala were reserved for storybooks and zoos. When I immigrated to Australia in my early twenties, I learned about other incredible species. The stripes on the Numbats! The spots on the Quolls! The ears on the Bilbies!

Unsurprisingly, these animals aren't as celebrated internationally as the Koala. Tragically though, they also remain unknown to most Australians, even as their populations face peril.

I'm proud to work for an organisation that is working to preserve these incredible species, and I'm just as proud to work with supporters like you who are making it all possible.

I'm also filled with hope by the members of AWC's Copley Circle, who have decided to include nature in their Wills. This type of charitable support is a declaration of two things: a wholehearted commitment to the future of our wildlife, and trust in AWC to continue this meaningful work for many decades.

We hope you enjoy this edition of The Copley Circle Newsletter, which has been produced with the intention of keeping you informed about the kind of work your legacy will be a part of.

If you have any feedback about this newsletter or would like to learn more about the work you're making possible, please get in touch anytime on carrie.alexander@australianwildlife.org or 08 6478 9730.

I'd be delighted to hear from you.

Carrie Alexander
Bequests Associate

Meet the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat

SCIENTIFIC NAME: Lasiorhinus krefftii // FIRST NATIONS NAME: Yaminon

NATIONAL CONSERVATION STATUS: Critically Endangered // ESTIMATED POPULATION: 400

The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat is the largest burrowing marsupial in the world, weighing up to 32 kilograms and measuring up to one metre in length. They can live to at least 30 years, spending most of their time underground in extensive burrow systems. One mapped burrow system included over 90 metres of tunnels and six entrances. This burrowing is important to the ecosystems in which they live, supporting nutrient cycling and creating habitat for other native species.



The Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat needs all the safe refuge it can get. Brad Leue/AWC

You are safeguarding the future of one of the world’s rarest species

THE FATE OF THE NORTHERN HAIRY-NOSED WOMBAT IS IN YOUR HANDS

Once distributed across Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland, years of land clearing, degradation, and direct persecution led Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat numbers to drop to just 35 individuals in the early 1980s.

Direct and immediate action was required to prevent the complete loss of the species, and through remarkable effort by the Queensland Government and collaborators, the population has now been restored to 400 individuals. Despite this success, there is still a long way to go if we hope to see them removed from the list of Australia’s Critically Endangered species.

The species’ small population size presents a significant conservation challenge. Just one natural event such as fire, flood, drought or disease could greatly increase the risk of extinction. Their fate is entirely reliant on ongoing conservation management, which your support is helping deliver.

Now, the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat lives in two small populations in outback Queensland: the remnant ‘stronghold’ population at Epping Forest National Park Scientific and a second ‘insurance’ population at Richard Underwood Nature Refuge.

In a landmark agreement, AWC entered a partnership with the Queensland Government to assume management responsibilities for

the wombat population at Richard Underwood Nature Refuge, located 45 minutes outside of St George in southern Queensland. This represents an important partnership between AWC and state government, a key element of our evolving strategy to influence conservation at landscape scale. Collaborations like this one offer an effective means for generating better conservation outcomes for Australia’s biodiversity by expanding AWC’s practical and effective approach beyond the borders of our own sanctuaries.

With your investment in AWC, you are improving the trajectory of the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat and safeguarding their future. Your support will:

- implement regionally appropriate fire management;
- enable effective weed and feral animal control;
- undertake a revegetation trial; and
- establish a genetic management plan to improve the growth and sustainability of existing and future populations.

The plight of the Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat, and AWC’s new position as its safeguard against extinction, is an important reminder of the gravity of what you’re helping to achieve. Thank you.

A stark reminder of Australia’s rank in ongoing biodiversity loss

While other species are globally recognised faces of the extinction crisis, few are as vulnerable as Australia’s own Northern Hairy-nosed Wombat.



14,000
Sumatran
Orangutans



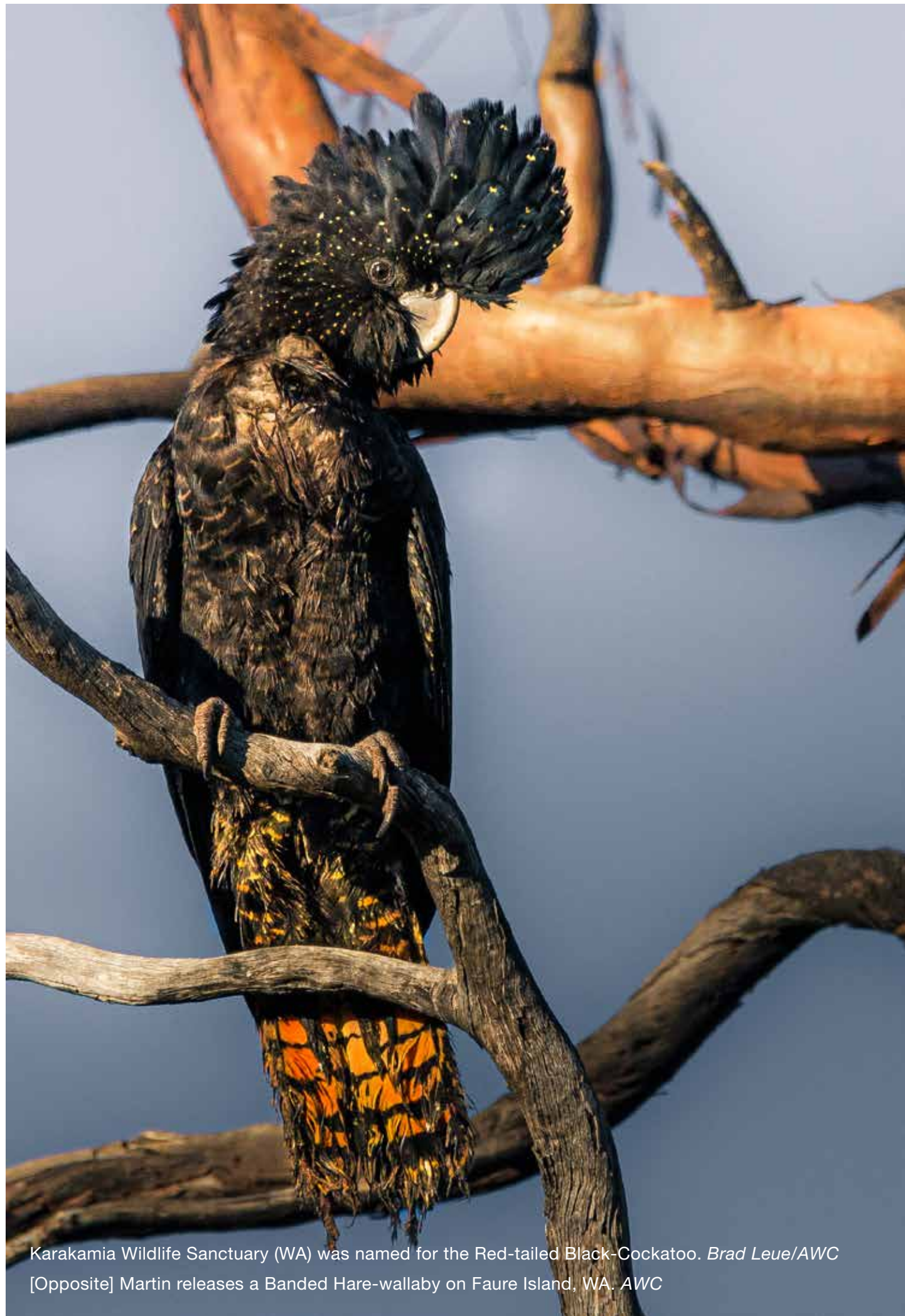
6,500
Black
Rhinos



1,800
Giant
Pandas



400
Northern Hairy-
nosed Wombats



Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary (WA) was named for the Red-tailed Black-Cockatoo. *Brad Leue/AWC*

[Opposite] Martin releases a Banded Hare-wallaby on Faure Island, WA. *AWC*

Martin Copley's legacy continues in many ways

This year marks the 10-year anniversary of the passing of AWC's founder, Martin Copley, in July of 2014. Many AWC supporters are well-acquainted with stories of Martin, and the luckiest even have first-hand memories of sharing a glass of red wine with him at his Karakamia home or following his canoe down Annie Creek at Mornington Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kimberley.

His legacy is widely celebrated for the lasting change he made on Australia's conservation landscape. But, like all of us, Martin's life was multi-faceted, and though many of us fondly memorialise Martin-the-conservationist, he is also remembered for another much-loved role – as Martin-the-family-man.

Martin, his wife Lorraine, and his three children split their time between England and Australia before purchasing a block of land in the Perth Hills that would become AWC's founding property, Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary (named after the beautiful Red-tailed Black-Cockatoos that called it home). Martin's son, Sam Copley, reminisces that he assumed every Australian kid had their own sanctuary to explore and their own band of Woylies living outside their doorstep.

The family holidays Martin organised always involved the outdoors, whether it be trips to the countryside or to the snowfields (he was an avid skier). A love and appreciation for nature was part of the inheritance he gifted his family.

His family warmly remembers his hard work and generosity, always available to give them his time, advice and support. They also playfully recall his devilish sense of humour, and that he loved to hear and share the crazy stories about

the animals he was working to safeguard (he particularly loved the one about male quolls, who keep mating until they keel over and die from pure exhaustion!)

Family was paramount for Martin, and everything he did, every hectare of land he strove to protect, was in their honour.

Martin wanted to ensure that his grandchildren – and theirs – would be able to know Australia's wildlife and landscapes as he did.

The love for nature that he instilled in his family is no better demonstrated than in the family that has followed in his conservation footsteps.

His daughter, Sophie Chamberlain, now serves as an AWC Director, and his great-niece, Isabel Connell, is a Field Ecologist & Senior Guide for AWC, traveling to many of the sanctuaries her great-uncle established, continuing his mission of connecting Australians with the species and landscapes that are our shared heritage.

According to Isabel, "Martin was a remarkable man who created something meaningful. I am so proud to be part of the legacy he left and hope to continue contributing to it for as long as I can. One day, maybe we can all meet the mission and sit back and enjoy the vision he once saw."

When Martin passed away, both AWC's Patron King Charles (then Prince of Wales) and AWC's Ambassador Sir David Attenborough sent words of condolence to his family. We lost not only one of Australia's greatest conservation heroes, but also an adored father, grandfather, and family man. Through his gifts and commitments, his legacy continues in more ways than one.





You are restoring biodiversity and protecting wildlife for future generations. *Brad Leue/AWC*

Unveiling the Australian Wildlife Endowment Fund

JUST AS YOU ARE PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE, SO TOO IS AWC

Due to the scale of the environmental crisis we face, restoring a rich, biodiverse Australian landscape will take many decades of committed and collective effort. AWC’s work will continue until there is no risk of further extinctions and Australia’s biodiversity is preserved in perpetuity.

To realise this vision, AWC must dramatically scale up our efforts. To support the transformational scale at which we will be investing in biodiversity restoration, a reliable and secure financial reserve is essential.

AWC is proud to have established the Australian Wildlife Endowment Fund, which will provide crucial funding to restore nature and protect wildlife across the country.

As with the intentions of a gift in your Will, the Endowment Fund is a way for AWC to

ensure your values and impact can continue for generations.

Building on AWC’s business-like approach, the Endowment Fund will generate a sustained income through strategic investments to support the pursuit of long-term conservation goals.

Why establish the Australian Wildlife Endowment Fund?

Gifts made to the Endowment Fund will create a sustainable, long-term and secure income source, allowing AWC to plan more effectively and remain ambitious in our approach to conservation.

The Endowment Fund will deliver lasting impact where it matters most – in the field. Income generated annually by the Endowment Fund will be used toward priority conservation activities.

What is the Endowment framework?

The Endowment Fund will establish a capital base to provide a sustainable and recurring source of income to support AWC’s mission. This income will provide funds for annual distribution towards conservation expenditure.

What impact will the Endowment Fund have?

Through prudent investment management, informed by independent expert investment advice, AWC aims to grow the Endowment Fund capital base over time, which will allow us to significantly invest in transformational action for wildlife. An ambitious goal for conservation means an ambitious intention for the Endowment Fund. The return objective of the Endowment Fund is CPI + 4.5% p.a. over rolling ten-year periods.

Thanks to your support, AWC is empowered to develop ambitious strategies with a plan for the long-term. With the establishment of the Endowment Fund, your legacy and your impact can be extended even further, growing beyond the value of your donation or gift in your Will. Your generosity will be intertwined with conservation achievements across this vast landscape forever.

If you are interested in designating your gift in Will to support the Australian Wildlife Endowment Fund, please get in touch with Carrie Alexander on carrie.alexander@australianwildlife.org or 08 6478 9730.

“Evolution on the Australian continent has created a unique and amazing biodiversity found across rugged and immense landscapes. It is truly magnificent, and unquestionably worth conserving.

The establishment of the Australian Wildlife Endowment Fund reflects our pragmatic, forward-thinking approach to conservation. The Endowment Fund will provide a sustainable, permanent source of income helping us to deliver and maintain conservation outcomes at scale over the long term.”

Nick Butcher, AWC Board Chair



A Burrowing Bettong is reintroduced at Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary, NT. Brad Leue/AWC

To the future: An ecology of love, hope, and action

The following is an extract from an essay written by renowned Australian conservation biologist Professor John Woinarski. If you are able, we urge you to use the QR code and read this beautiful and inspiring piece in its entirety. Although originally penned for an audience of ecologists, the ideas apply to all of us who care deeply about the natural world.

Ecology is a charmed science. It provides us with the capability, the acuity, to see beyond the simple veneer of a place or environment and instead perceive another dimension: the convoluted interplay of its components, the depth of its connections, its patterns and processes. To do ecology is exhilarating; it is transformative; it is about becoming something else, about shedding the skin and perspectives that clutter and distort our human-centric myopia; to do ecology is about pricking the delusion of being apart from and above nature. It is the wonder of seeing the world from the perspective of different species. It is about understanding the endless and enduring shifts of time and place, the infinitely variable patterning inherent in the natural world, in the world into which we must fit.

But to do ecology – and especially conservation biology – in this age is also devastating. Our science, our understanding, uniquely sharpen our perspectives, give us a cursed privilege of seeing the cracks, about watching them widen, about feeling grief at the casualties, about knowing that the future will likely be characterized by increasing loss.

...

How should and can we respond to such current and looming loss of nature? To despair is understandable. But it is not helpful.

...

Here, I highlight the role of love in ecology and in what we do. Although we may seldom admit it explicitly, I suspect most of us study ecology because it provides a key to the wonder, the beauty and mystery of nature. Nature moves us, shapes us, welcomes us, rewards us and embraces us. We do ecology for love of nature, for love.

...

As well as love, I want also to focus on hope, as a counterweight to despair. It is a tremulous, fragile thing, sorely needed. There is hope for nature, for us, for our descendants. We need to nourish it and let it nourish us.

...

We need to advocate for the things we love. It comes down also to the age-old question: what it is to have a life well-lived? I think it is not riches and status, travel and possessions, but rather to love and be loved, to care for the world around you, and to try to make a difference. Our capability and training as ecologists – that is, understanding complex systems and the relationships among components – give us unique insight into the value of nature, the signs, consequences and causes of its decay, and what needs to be done to protect and restore the natural world.

Professor John Woinarski is a conservation biologist and ecologist, an AWC Board Director and a valued member of AWC's Science Advisory Network. John is a leading authority on biodiversity in Australia and has been involved in research and conservation management for more than 40 years. While his research interests are diverse, much of his work has focused on the ecology and conservation of birds and mammals in northern Australia.

Woinarski, J.C.Z. 2023. To the future: an ecology of love, hope, and action. *Austral Ecology* 48: 1705–1712.

Use the QR code to read John's moving essay in full.



Animal indicators of ecosystem health

HOW MANY OF THESE IMPORTANT SPECIES HAVE YOU SEEN?

With your help, AWC's extensive Ecohealth (ecological health monitoring) program is measuring trends in animals and habitats, allowing us to gauge the success of our conservation activities. At each sanctuary and partnership area, a unique set of animal indicators are closely monitored, focusing on species at risk of decline including reintroduced species, species that play significant ecosystem roles, and major threats (e.g. feral predators and herbivores).

Here we share a few of the threatened and iconic species AWC scientists monitor across Australia. You can use the QR code to view the detailed annual reporting from the Ecohealth program.



The Kimberley

Yellow-spotted Monitor (*Varanus panoptes*)

Growing up to 2 metres and weighing in at 7 kilograms, the Yellow-spotted Monitor is among the largest lizards in the world. As a top order predator this species plays an important ecological role and has a broad diet that includes amphibians. At AWC's Mornington-Marion Downs Wildlife Sanctuary in the Kimberley, monitor numbers have declined substantially since the arrival of cane toads. But there is hope. Evidence from other sites indicates recovery over time, provided populations don't become locally extinct. Photo: Ian Bool/AWC



Outback Queensland

Pink Cockatoo (*Cacatua leadbeateri*)

The endangered eastern subspecies of this long-lived cockatoo lives in arid and semiarid woodlands in the Murray-Darling, Eyre and Bulloo River basins. Pairs nest in hollows in cypress pines that are at least 80 years old. The species is monitored at Bowra Wildlife Sanctuary, on Kunja Country near Cunnamulla in south-west Queensland. This year QUT researchers identified hotspots of calling activity and a nesting hollow at Bowra using bioacoustics. Photo: Tim Henderson/AWC



The Kimberley

Northern Quoll (*Dasyurus hallucatus*)

Quolls are the largest marsupial carnivores on mainland Australia and play important roles in the ecosystems of which they are a part. The Northern Quoll is the smallest species (0.5–1 kilogram) and is known as Wijingarra in the west Kimberley on Dambimangari Country. The endangered Northern Quoll faces a barrage of threats including cattle, inappropriate fire regimes, feral cats and cane toads. Numbers have significantly declined at Mornington-Marion Downs since the arrival of cane toads but populations are co-existing with toads elsewhere. Photo: Brad Leue/AWC



Central Australia

Brush-tailed Mulgara (*Dasycercys blythi*)

Despite only weighing in at approximately 100 grams, the Brush-tailed Mulgara is one of the largest remaining native predatory mammals in Australia's deserts. However, their persistence is threatened by feral cats and foxes. At Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary in Central Australia, Brush-tailed Mulgaras have benefitted from the 9,450-hectare feral predator-free fenced safe haven, with surveys revealing the species' occupancy within the fence is higher than the historical average across the property. Photo: Wayne Lawler/AWC



Outback New South Wales

Malleefowl (*Leipoa ocellata*)

The Malleefowl is a member of a unique family of birds that build large mounds to incubate their eggs and the only one to employ these sophisticated mound-building techniques in semi-arid and arid habitats. Once abundant, the species is now rapidly declining due to a combination of land clearing, increasingly large and intense fires, and predation by foxes. At Scotia Wildlife Sanctuary, monitoring has revealed that Malleefowl breeding activity in the 8,000-hectare safe haven is double what it is outside the fence. Photo: Kim Wormald/AWC





Visit for campsites

Bowra Wildlife Sanctuary
Kalamurina Wildlife Sanctuary
Mt Gibson Wildlife Sanctuary
Newhaven Wildlife Sanctuary



Visit for day-walking tracks

Bowra Wildlife Sanctuary
Paruna Wildlife Sanctuary



Visit on occasional open days

Karakamia Wildlife Sanctuary
Mallee Cliffs National Park
Pilliga Partnership Area
Yookamurra Wildlife Sanctuary

- AWC Sanctuary
- Partnership with Government
- Partnership with Private Landholder

Visit a sanctuary

While the primary purpose of AWC’s network of sanctuaries and partnership areas is to ensure that wildlife persists, a handful are open for public visitation. We’d love for you to drop in to see the impact of your support up close and experience the locations where the gift in your Will will live on in the field.

Check our website for more information about visiting a sanctuary. Most sanctuaries are open seasonally and booking is essential.



Visit with a touring partner

Bullo River Station
Kalamurina Wildlife Sanctuary
Pungalina–Seven Emu Wildlife Sanctuary

Sanctuaries closed in 2024

In a normal year Mornington–Marion Downs and Charnley River–Artesian Range wildlife sanctuaries are open to the public for camping. However, both sanctuaries are currently closed while we recover from major flood damage. We look forward to welcoming you back in future years.



Thank you

To those of you who have already joined The Copley Circle by remembering nature in your Will – thank you. This is one of the most meaningful decisions you can make for conservation, so we feel greatly honoured to help continue your impact for Australia's wildlife.

If this is something you're considering doing, please know that we're here anytime to provide assistance and resources. Including a gift in your Will to AWC is easier than you might think and can be done with the simple organisational details below:

Registered name: Australian Wildlife Conservancy
ABN: 36 068 572 556

Wherever you are in your journey, we are grateful for your commitment to Australia's wildlife and landscapes. None of this work would be possible without you.

Please get in touch with Bequests Associate Carrie Alexander anytime to hear more about what's happening at AWC or to learn how your values can extend beyond your lifetime.

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